

Minutes of a meeting held at 2.45 p.m. on Saturday, 13th November 1971, at the home of the Chairman of BUFORA, 35 Winchester Drive, Newcastle, Staffordshire.

PRESENT

Messrs: Roger Stanway, Lionel Beer, Arnold West, Anthony Pace, Tim O'Brien, Stephen Smith, Robin Lindsay, David Viewing and Derek, the Secretary of Interstellar Research.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from John Cleary-Baker, Geoffrey Doel, Betty Wood, Pam Kennedy, Graham Knewstub, Brian Winder, Trevor Whitaker, Leonard Cramm and Anne Harcourt.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman began by welcoming everyone to North Staffordshire on behalf of Anthony Pace and himself. He expressed the hope that this meeting would mark the start of a new era in the history of the Association.

The Chairman then asked the Vice Chairman, Lionel Beer, to read out the relevant extract from the Minutes of the last Committee meeting which stated the purpose and intentions of the present meeting. He thanked Tony Pace for providing a full and useful agenda.

The Chairman expressed the hope that the meeting would agree on many aspects of research policy and formulate proposals that would be submitted to the Committee of BUFORA at its next meeting for general approval and implementation.

2. TIM O'BRIEN

The National Investigations Co-ordinator of BUFORA, Tim O'Brien, then summarised the form that his present activities took: Press cuttings were being sent to him at a steady rate; there were no regional co-ordinators at present; he was despatching questionnaires to investigators and witnesses but his supply was nearly exhausted although new forms were being drafted and printed; he had a list of six evaluators.

3. STEPHEN SMITH

The recently retired Research Director, Stephen Smith, then summarised his own activities prior to retirement. He categorised research material into "Real Time" and "Historical". Referring to the latter he said he had in his possession approximately eight hundred sighting report forms and a card index of important historical UFO events.

ACTION

i. Stephen Smith said he would be willing to pass these records on to his successor as soon as suitable arrangements could be made to do so.

The BUFORA files have now been transferred to the new Research Director.

ii. It was decided that the methods of storage and retrieval of research material should be reviewed and improved as soon as possible.

The Interstellar Research Secretary agreed to supply the Research Director with cost figures relating to the microfilming of records.

4. ANTHONY PACE

The recently appointed Research Director, Anthony Pace, said he had despatched ninety letters to research orientated members of BUFORA and those with technical qualifications inviting suggestions and proposals for research policy. There had been a small yet useful response from, inter alia, Ivar Mackay, Brian Winder, Graham Knewstub, Trevor Whitaker and Geoffrey Doel. He said he had also sent personal invitations to members of the Committee and their close associates to attend the present meeting.

In view of the short time available in which to organise the Research Meeting only one in four of the membership were circulated with a letter inviting proposals. The Research Director would be extremely grateful to hear from other members on any views they might have or proposals they would care to make to improve and stimulate our Research Policy and the general running of the Association.

5. WORKING HYPOTHESIS

Stephen Smith proposed that the Association's approach to 'events' should be circum-

scribed in some reasonable way in order to make the range of 'events' under the heading of UFOlogy of more manageable proportions. Really this comes back to (crudely) deciding whether BUFOKA is 'nuts and bolts' or 'E.T.H.' or 'fayries' orientated.

The Research Director proposed that, following from the above, some definite theory be established to attempt to account for the many observed characteristics where the reality of these characteristics is directly supported by the bulk of factual evidence. 'Advanced technologies' appears to be the most likely candidate.

The above two proposals provoked considerable discussion and although the meeting agreed with the tenor of the proposals there was disagreement about the exact definition and limitations of BUFOKA's future research policy. However the following policies were agreed:-

AGREED - That BUFOKA should investigate unidentifiable phenomena which it considers to be related to and within the ambit of the working hypothesis that it represents a phenomenon which exhibits characteristics associated with advanced technologies and/or intelligences superior to our own. These unidentifiable phenomena are more popularly known as Unidentified Flying Objects.

AGREED - that other hypotheses should be formulated whenever and wherever appropriate in order to ensure an open minded approach to research and investigation.

AGREED - that the definition of the UFO phenomenon was exceedingly difficult and that the Association should not become embroiled in semantics.

AGREED - that priority should be given to the investigation of "landing" reports and "close approaches" and that conversely "lights in the sky" should be treated as a low priority, such reports being merely recorded for reference purposes.

6. PUBLIC RELATIONS

The meeting next considered Peter Wain's proposal that efforts should be made towards getting the name of BUFOKA in the public and official eye.

This will serve two purposes.

1. To obtain more reports by virtue of the publicity and
2. To gain some measure of respectability and possibly attract individuals or bodies who could benefit us by sponsoring projects, giving us an entree into certain areas and institutions that are normally barred and, perhaps, in due course, even providing a Government grant, setting up a Trust and providing a H.Q. and office. Our public image needs to be worked on.

ACTION

The meeting agreed with this proposal and recommended that the Committee appoint a Public Relations Officer and provide him or her with terms of reference.

7. USE OF MANPOWER

The meeting then considered a second proposal by Peter Wain that a survey be made of existing members' application forms to form a reliable and dedicated corps of people to handle the inevitable volume of paperwork and offer various services to the Association.

e.g. Peter Wain, 51 High Street, Croydon.

Small businessman who has good contact with Sun newspaper.

Has two vans which could be used to transport equipment etc. if required.

Is a private pilot and has access to an aircraft most of the time (aerial photography of landing sites.)

Can provide facilities for sky watches or meetings at Biggin Hill Airport, Kent.

Main contribution to Association is lecturing on UFOs in London.

ACTION

The meeting agreed that this survey should be done as soon as possible and recommended that the Committee implement this at its next meeting.

As you are aware this proposal has now been implemented with the issuing of the recent

newsletter from your Chairman. A manpower analysis based on the returned questionnaires will be published in the Summer Journal. In practical terms the Research Director is already endeavouring to make good use of the various talents and assistance offered.

8. DIRECTORY OF CONSULTANTS

The Research Director proposed that a list or directory be compiled of people in various fields of science and branches of industries who, though not members of the Association or directly connected with it, could be contacted by certain members to provide expertise and facilities and to perform services which are beyond the resources of the Association.

ACTION

- i. The meeting agreed and recommended the Committee to implement this at its next meeting.
- ii. The meeting agreed to ask the Editor of the Journal, John Cleary-Baker, to insert a request for names and details of possible consultants who may be personally known to members of BUFORA.

The Vice Chairman agreed to draft a suitable notice and forward it to the Editor.

Anthony Pace naturally agreed to take on the responsibility of compiling the Directory of Consultants and, more important, to make future use of the expertise which it is hoped will be available to us.

REQUEST FOR CONSULTANTS OR ADVISORS.

The Research Director earnestly requests those members to write to him who would be prepared to act in a consultancy capacity and offer their specialist knowledge in practical UFO investigation and research or in the administration of the Association. Alternatively members are asked to propose the name and qualifications of someone from personal knowledge who would be willing to give advice and provide certain expertise or facilities in fields of study beneficial to the work of BUFORA. Such persons from science and industry could form the core of a 'loose' advisory panel of experts able to give their own particular opinions independently of other 'members of the panel.' Details of these advisors would be kept in the strictest confidence, unless otherwise agreed and not necessarily listed openly as BUFORA consultants.

9. INTERSTELLAR RESEARCH (I.S.R.) - SKYWATCHES

David Viewing summarised the purpose and activities of I.S.R. explaining that it was formed in the summer of 1971 and now consists of about fifteen persons most of whom were originally members of the now disbanded Bedfordshire UFO Society (BUFOS). "I.S.R. is non-constitutional and is principally interested in the extraterrestrial concepts of the UFO phenomenon, i.e. attempts to detect the presence of extraterrestrial space vehicles on a real time basis, if in fact they do exist. As witness sightings are felt by I.S.R. to contain too little information, I.S.R. utilises various pieces of equipment to monitor changes in the environmental conditions. The project is experimental and exploratory and represents a working model of what should and could be done to detect extraterrestrial visitors (E.T.V.) but as yet, it has not been sufficiently comprehensive to produce successful results."

David stated that I.S.R. would be pleased to co-operate with BUFORA especially in connection with skywatches, providing these were well disciplined and organised.

AGREED - the meeting expressed considerable interest in I.S.R.'s activities and agreed that BUFORA and I.S.R. should maintain close links and coordinate research wherever this is possible.

ACTION

It was agreed that the Skywatch Organiser, Lincoln Richford, should be asked to formulate detailed procedures for skywatches and conduct rehearsals with participants to ensure co-ordination and uniformity in procedure prior to skywatches.

10. EVALUATION

The meeting considered the following three proposals:-

- a. The reinstatement of our panel of evaluators as used by Richard Farrow to appraise the content and conclusions of the reports sent to central files.

Stephen Smith.

- b. Evaluation to be carried out by experienced members. Results of evaluation should be sent at regular intervals, say quarterly, to all regions and the best should be circulated to all members in the research bulletin or by other methods.

Trevor Whitaker.

- c. To determine the identity of the phenomenon observed, the UFO reports should be passed to qualified and experienced consultants in the fields of astronomy, meteorology, etc.

Mark Stenhoff.

The meeting believed that an evaluation should be made only after a case had been fully investigated and consultants' reports and opinions received. An evaluation ought only to be made once all feasible enquiries and investigations had been completed. It was suggested that there should be a small Evaluation panel or committee which, in the event of major cases, would meet to discuss the case and attempt to arrive at a joint decision.

ACTION

The meeting recommended the Committee to draw up a short list of suitable evaluators and appoint the number that was required.

- x At the Executive Committee Meeting held on 4th December 1971, Roger Stanway proposed that while they were happy to have John Cleary-Baker continue as Evaluation Officer, it might be of additional value to use the combined talents of a panel of three evaluators when important matters arose. The Committee then agreed that this panel, for the present, should comprise:-

Dr. J. Cleary-Baker,
Dr. G.G. Doel and
Mr. A.R. Pace.

- x It was proposed by John Cleary-Baker that any evaluated verdict arrived at by the Association's Evaluation Officer or panel should be the view of the Association as a whole. This was seconded by P. Wain and agreed.

11. INVESTIGATIONS SEMINAR

The Vice Chairman proposed that a seminar be held similar to the Cambridge Conference held several years earlier.

AGREED - that this was a useful undertaking in principle but that it should be postponed for the time being.

12. INVESTIGATION

The following proposals were discussed by the meeting:-

- a. That we try a different approach to collecting evidence by attempting "in depth" investigations of a small number of selected cases in place of the almost traditional shallow examination of the greatest possible number of events, i.e. quality instead of quantity.

Brian Winder.

- b. That one of our mistakes in the past has been to overestimate the value of the scientific approach to witnesses. A lead ought to be taken by those skilled in dealing with people, e.g. policemen, lawyers, doctors and social workers.

Brian Winder.

- c. Expansion as far as possible through active members and groups of the number of investigators on our books.

Stephen Smith.

- d. It would seem to be essential that proper 'published' scientific reports be completed containing the results of investigations into specific cases, or 'waves' or research projects etc., basically to provide the Association with proper records of its work but also to be used to give us the much needed 'publicity' of the right kind.

Anthony R. Pace.

- e. Various suggestions regarding the working of an efficient investigation network were received from Trevor Whitaker, Peter Wain, Mark Stenhoff and David Pace.

There should be a recognised procedure, known to all members.

e.g. National coordinator sends appropriate cuttings to regional coordinators when received from bureau. Members who hear of sightings or see cuttings send them direct to the appropriate regional coordinator, who, in turn, informs the National Coordinator that he is undertaking an investigation. Regional coordinator should be responsible for seeing that the investigation is carried out as fully and as quickly as possible and for sending the reports to the National Coordinator as soon as the investigation is complete or, in the case of long investigations, interim reports at fixed periods.

Trevor Whitaker.

f. Regarding Regional Coordinators.

Regions should be clearly definable areas, say following county boundaries, small enough for the coordinator to get to know all his investigators but large enough for there to be only about ten in the whole country.

The meeting supported the general principles contained in the above proposals, (apart from b.) save that it expressed the need for care in choosing investigators where a similar axiom of quality instead of quantity was applicable. It was felt that the word investigator was used too frequently to describe merely a member of BUFOHA who visits or writes to a witness.

It was thought desirable in future that a potential investigator should attend a number of small informal weekend seminars involving simulation exercises to ensure a sufficiently high standard of investigative expertise.

ACTION

- i. The Research Director agreed to draft plans for simulation exercises and case discussions for potential investigators.
- ii. The National Investigation Coordinator agreed to draft proposals for the coordination of investigations and the appointment of regional coordinators.

C.A.E. O'Brien has produced two reports dealing with the investigations section, the first concerned with current UFO events for the period 1st September 1971 to 21st December 1971 and the second dealing with section re-organisation including the appointment of regional coordinators.

13. UFO DETECTION AND OBSERVATION

The meeting agreed with the following proposals of the Research Director:-

Although these may be considered inadequate for the type of observations applicable to the UFO phenomenon, the well established methods used in meteor observing would at least provide a basic scientific system of recording phenomena of the night sky, e.g. four observers facing the cardinal points and a fifth acting as a recorder and so on. Today more emphasis is placed on photographic and spectrographic observations supported by visual meteor counts and magnitude estimations.

Results of sky watches, as far as meteor or satellite observations are concerned should be forwarded to the appropriate body, e.g. B.A.A. This would certainly help to improve our image and could be of benefit by providing an exchange of information.

From the above proposal that diffraction gratings and polarising filters be used on sky watches visually or, better still, with a camera and, moreover, that their significance, function, practical use and results obtainable be set out in a single instruction leaflet to be supplied with the equipment.

14. MOBILE RESEARCH UNIT

The present meeting was authorised by the last A.G.N. to decide on the disposal of the research van. The van was at present with Richard Beet of SIGAP.

AGREED - to sell the research van, less portable investigation equipment, to David Viewing on behalf of I.S.R. for the nominal sum of five new pence. This decision was subject to ratification at the next committee meeting.

The Executive Committee has since expressed themselves satisfied with this solution and has ratified the decision.

15. RESEARCH

The following three proposals were then discussed and agreed upon:-

- a. That a true appraisal of existing BUFORA files could be made to separate out as much as possible the 'good' (and I hesitate to define that word) cases from the 'bad' or 'poor' (likewise) ... These and other cases then could be presented to one of the computer based teams doing cataloguing research.

Stephen Smith.

- b. That specialisation should be a key factor in research and that this policy be encouraged as it was in the past by research directors when the Council of Member Societies was active but with the emphasis now placed on individual members of the Association and others, who would be directly responsible to the Director of Research.

Stephen Smith.

- c. That we must look for something a little more positive than statistical analysis of sighting reports. e.g. Examination of the Bedford Society's results with their mobile laboratory project may be worthwhile in helping to see if this type of research is of value.

Trevor Whitaker.

16. PHOTOGRAPHS

ACTION

The meeting recommended the committee to decide who should take care of the photographs in BUFORA's possession and the steps that should be taken to file, classify and analyse them.

It was agreed that after Dr. Geoffrey Doel had catalogued them, Anthony Pace would take charge of the Association's photographic records which included numerous photographs, a number of original negatives, 35 mm. slides and some movie films.

The Committee very much appreciate Dr. Doel's kind act of donating his own slide collection to BUFORA.

Request for Photographic Evidence

In order to improve the quantity but moreover the quality of BUFORA's photographic records, thereby facilitating future research projects, the Research Director wishes to hear from members who can supply authentic photographic material or who know of sources where such material can be obtained. Our ultimate aim would be a reference library comprising the best photographic evidence on record. Obviously a photograph is of little value unless accompanied by a full report of the relative UFO sighting including the necessary technical information for use in analysis. To help in this matter and to save excessive duplication it is hoped to issue a comprehensive catalogue giving details of the present extent and quality of photographic material with the summer edition of the Journal. Would members therefore write with information to the Research Director.

17. PROPOSALS FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS

The meeting discussed and agreed in principle with the following proposals:-

- a. An appraisal of the card index project by Stephen Smith.

ACTION - required.

- b. Application of orthographic projection techniques (as used by Leonard Cramp) to the photographic records of the Association to compare more accurately the basic ratios of dimensions of photographed UFOs and to determine a more accurate category of 'shapes'. Other uses could be envisaged from this application.

Anthony R. Pace.

ACTION - required.

- c. Establishment within BUFORA of small groups or individuals with special interest in certain types of reports, e.g. landings, inhibition-of-car ignition cases, photographic cases and so on.

Mark Stenhoff.

ACTION - required.

- d. Even more specialist interest in UFO 'characteristics', e.g. burnt circles, glowing effects, etc.

ACTION - required.

- e. Important witnesses of close approaches should be revisited and interviewed to discover if the passage of time has affected either themselves or their original accounts.
Robin Lindsay.

ACTION - required.

- f. Improvement in the presentation of Ufolog in the Journal.

ACTION

Vice Chairman to arrange this with Mrs. Smith and the Editor.

Action has already been taken giving us the 'new-look' Ufolog.

It was agreed that proposals which had been received too late to be included in the agenda should be discussed at future committee and research meetings.

18. CONCLUSION

Finally the Chairman thanked all those present for attending and expressed the gratitude and appreciation of the meeting for the generous way in which Margaret Pace had looked after their bodily sustenance.

The meeting adjourned at 7.40 p.m.

Anthony R. Pace,
11 Soudley,
Cheswardine,
Market Drayton,
Shropshire.

From the Research Director

April 1972.

Many of you I am sure will have seen that excellent programme in the B.B.C. 2 Horizon series in February entitled, "The day it rained periwinkles." If you did and like me have a serious approach to the UFO phenomenon, you would have listened intently to the encouraging words of the man who is perhaps the world's leading exponent of scientific UFO study, who from long experience of the problems inherent in investigating UFO reports, can speak with great authority on the subject. You will probably have recognised ~~MR~~ J. ALLEN HYNEK the man in question, a prominent American astronomer and a scientist in his own right.

The simple words which captured my imagination were those when he said, "Where there are patterns science may enter". Unless one chooses to ignore the evidence, then especially on the global scale we have seen many types of patterns emerge over the last 25 years and make their presence distinctly noticeable in UFO literature. This was for me indeed an encouraging note. The same programme, designed for that purpose portrayed the resistant attitudes of established science to the study of new phenomena choosing the well known examples of meteorites and more recently 'ball lightning'. Like all new sciences the study of Unidentified Flying Objects has suffered long from the dogma of the establishment. The history of the sciences is littered with such controversies.

But in history there is hope. The tide is turning, albeit gradually, but it is surely turning. Highly respected scientists are giving a little more of their valuable time and attention to considering the phenomenon. Inevitably the science of UFOs will become accepted and respectable, and history as usual will have the last laugh.

My first task after taking over as Director of Research was to organise a Research Policy Meeting on an idea suggested by the Vice-Chairman Lionel Beer at the October A.G.M. Committee Meeting. It would have been so easy to put off the proposed discussions until the New Year, but although time was at a premium I was determined that our meeting should take place on 13th November, 1971.

The Research Policy Meeting at the Chairman's home was said by all those who attended to be an unqualified success, and out of it came some definite plans for the future conduct of both Investigation and Research. These bold plans, whilst it is hoped will improve the standing of BUFORA in national and international affairs, are still within the limits of our present financial and manpower resources. Major policy decisions as these, affecting the whole future working of the Association, are naturally the business of the membership from which our organisation is formed.

The minutes of the November meeting are therefore set out in the following pages of the Research Section and are virtually unchanged from their original form. The proposals agreed upon were subsequently ratified at the December Executive Committee Meeting. I have added certain comments where appropriate to describe briefly what has been done so far as regards taking action on the proposals. In addition there are the important advertisements; for proposals from the membership for further stimulation of our Research Policy; for Consultants with the aim of forming an advisory panel of experts and for photographic material so that the quality of the Association's records can be slowly improved to facilitate future photographic research projects. I hope you will respond to these requests.

This type of meeting may have been the first of its kind, but take it from me it will not be the last. Future Research Policy Meetings will take place from time to time and their outcome published in the pages of our Journal.